



THREE-ROADS

A SOLUTION TO SYDNEY'S PERFECT HOUSING STORM

**BUSINESS
SYDNEY**

**BUSINESS
WESTERN
SYDNEY**



BUSINESS SYDNEY

Business Sydney is the voice for business in Sydney. We advocate, influence and deliver policies and outcomes to drive economic growth and create opportunities to invest, work, live and visit our city. For nearly two hundred years, we have worked to advance Sydney as a global, competitive and liveable city.

BUSINESS WESTERN SYDNEY

Business Western Sydney is the region's peak business advocacy organisation representing a regional economic footprint in the tens of billions. Our members include the CEOs, chairs and leading executives from more than 110 top global businesses, major Australian corporations, local not-for-profits and government agencies with a significant presence in Western Sydney.



The Housing Industry Association (HIA) is Australia's only national industry association representing the interests of the residential building industry. Our members include volume house & apartment builders, small to medium builders & renovators, residential developers, trade contractors, major building product manufacturers and suppliers. HIA members construct over 85 per cent of the nation's new dwellings.

Acknowledgement

This paper has been prepared by Business Sydney and Business Western Sydney, in conjunction with the Housing Industry Association (HIA). October 2023.

Editor: David Jones, Business Sydney
Design: Andrew Hamilton, Business Sydney
Enquiries: enquiries@businesssydney.com

CONTENTS

Foreword	1
Reimagining Parramatta Road - Sydney's First 'Highway'	3
Reimagining Victoria Road - A Utilitarian Connection	5
Reimagining the Great Western Highway - A Historic Road with Renewed Purpose	7
Light Rail an Ally in Urban Renewal and Housing Solutions	9
Barriers that Limit Reimagining the 'Three-Roads'	13
The Road Out of Sydney's Housing Crisis	16
Innovative Ideas and a Call To Action	17
The Three Roads	19

FOREWORD

Sydney is currently encountering a ‘perfect storm’ in housing its people.

It has an acute housing shortage contributing to a home ownership affordability crisis, especially for essential workers currently unable to live close to where they work.

And there is also a growing crisis with the shortage of rental accommodation as the buy-to-rent market also falters.

Our political leaders, including Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and NSW Premier Chris Minns, have set ambitious targets to increase housing stock.

Mr Albanese wants to see one million more homes built in Australia over a five-year period – hopefully many of them in Sydney.

The Prime Minister’s signature policy – a \$10 billion Housing Australia Future Fund to build 30,000 new social and affordable homes – is now a step closer after passing parliament.

Premier Minns wants to ease the housing crisis by building “up” rather than rely solely on stretching the boundaries of Sydney’s massive urban footprint.

The Premier began this process by announcing a \$2.2 billion Housing and Infrastructure Plan, part of which addresses affordable housing.

Business Sydney and Business Western Sydney believe the **real solution** to the housing crisis rests with the entrepreneurial spirit.

The road to a solution is attracting new housing investment. That means simplifying planning approval processes so that business can get on with the job of creating housing.

Many factors have contributed to Sydney’s housing dilemma. They include poor planning, the lack of a broad view of the problem and its solution combined with bureaucratic inertia.

We know that property developers could be building thousands of housing units in Sydney right now but the planning and approval process is glacially slow.

There is an exciting solution to help achieve the Prime Minister’s goal and to ease Sydney’s housing crisis.

Three major arterial roads – Parramatta Road, Victoria Road and the Great Western Highway – offer imaginative housing solutions, and an estimated 75,000 new housing units.

We see the potential of these roads for innovative medium density developments to build communities and neighbourhoods.

The resulting influx of people also presents opportunities for innovative public transport solutions such as expanding Sydney's light rail network.

The contribution of organisations such as *Housing Now!* is helping to keep the spotlight firmly on innovative housing solutions.

In this paper, we outline the when, where and how to make the most of opportunities that are good for Sydney and Western Sydney.

These are solutions that can solve the housing crisis and, most importantly, they are also good for the people of our city.



Paul Nicolaou
Executive Director
Business Sydney



David Borger
Executive Director
Business Western Sydney

REIMAGINING PARRAMATTA ROAD SYDNEY'S FIRST 'HIGHWAY'

Going back to its colonial origins, Parramatta Road begins on the western fringe of the Sydney CBD stretching 23 kilometres to Parramatta.

Originally an Indigenous pathway, it was Sydney's first "highway" linking Sydney Cove to a settlement that for the first 70 years was the seat of colonial power.

Parramatta Road has never been an attractive corridor and currently has a mixture of decaying buildings, closed shops and used car yards.

It has defied numerous attempts to give it an economic revival.

Parramatta Road needs people to bring it back to life and to make it attractive with viable and innovative solutions.





RENEWAL SOLUTIONS



Housing

Medium density housing along its length from Broadway in the east to Granville in the west.



Public Transport

People movement with light rail extending from the Sydney CBD to Strathfield and beyond.



Commercial Development

Shopfront development in tandem with housing.

REIMAGINING VICTORIA ROAD

A UTILITARIAN CONNECTION

Victoria Road begins just west of the Anzac Bridge running through Drummoyne, Gladesville and West Ryde on its way to the heart of Parramatta ending at O'Connell Street in the shadow of Parramatta Stadium and Parramatta Park.

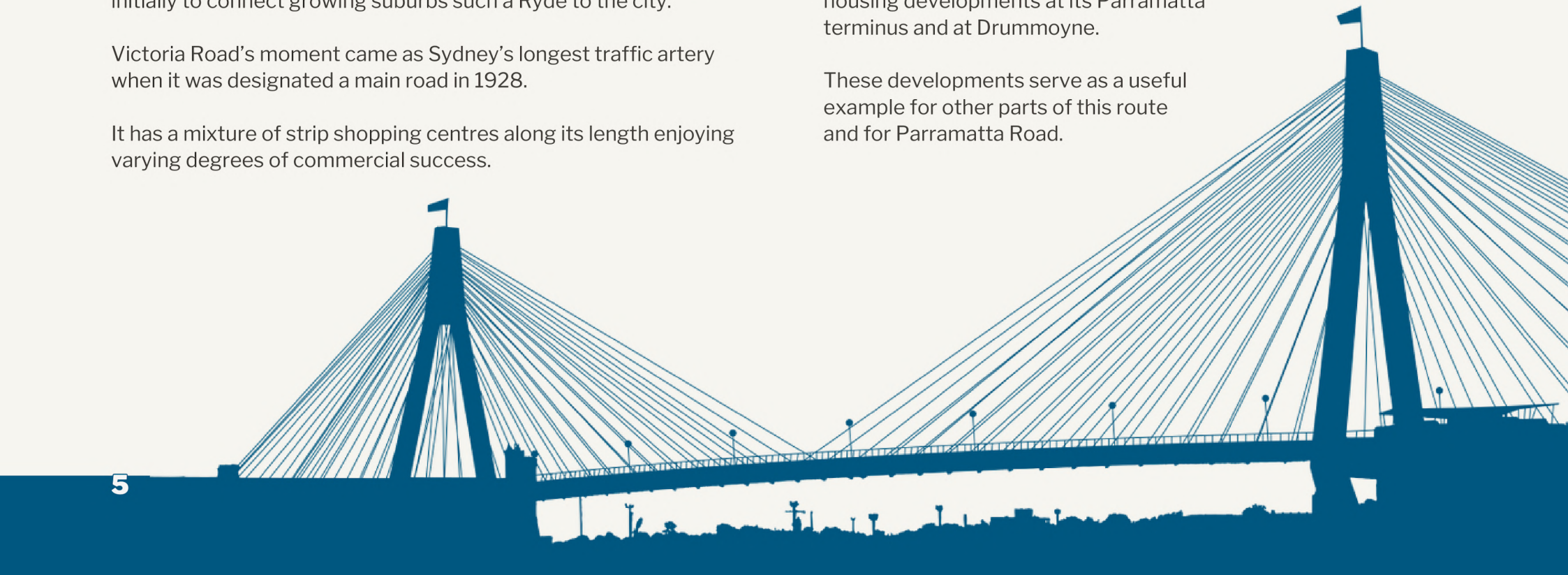
It has always been a utilitarian route built for pragmatic purposes initially to connect growing suburbs such as Ryde to the city.

Victoria Road's moment came as Sydney's longest traffic artery when it was designated a main road in 1928.

It has a mixture of strip shopping centres along its length enjoying varying degrees of commercial success.

Victoria Road already plays host to medium rise housing developments at its Parramatta terminus and at Drummoyne.

These developments serve as a useful example for other parts of this route and for Parramatta Road.





RENEWAL SOLUTIONS



Housing

Medium density development incorporating and enhancing existing retail shopping strips.



Public Transport

Victoria Road is well served with bus services but would also benefit from light rail investment.



Commercial Development

Strengthen existing successful strip shopping centres while paying attention to the need for adequate parking.

REIMAGINING THE GREAT WESTERN HIGHWAY

HISTORIC ROAD WITH RENEWED PURPOSE

The Great Western Highway from Parramatta to Penrith offers a strong business case for development. It is a truly historic route through Western Sydney.

It is well suited to medium density housing development with the M4 having taken on the mantle as the main road link to the west and onward to the Blue Mountains.

The Great Western Highway is also an attractive proposition for extensive medium density housing investment.

Much of its length is well served by the western rail corridor with numerous suburban railway stations. It also offers greenfield or currently under-developed sites.



RENEWAL SOLUTIONS



Housing

Medium density housing following the spine of the highway and railway lines.



Public Transport

Upgrading of stations and improvement of rail services to match population growth.



Commercial Development

Retail opportunities that are amenity focussed such as cafes and restaurants to build an urban village feel.



The Great Western Highway west of Parramatta
which offers room to grow and build



LIGHT RAIL AN ALLY IN URBAN RENEWAL AND HOUSING SOLUTIONS

Light rail is already showing what it can do in Sydney in building and connecting communities.

The George Street experience in the CBD has amounted to a transformation.

Sydney Light Rail is carrying record numbers of people and growing month-to-month. More people are using light rail than the entire Metro and ferry networks combined.

It also delivers massive “bang for the buck”. Investment in light rail looks very modest given the substantial development and patronage that has since flowed.

It’s not hard to imagine how a natural expansion of Sydney’s light rail system could also deliver great benefits to other parts of Sydney.

Take a Parramatta Road to Green Square route via Central for example. Light rail would facilitate significant housing investment and population growth in these corridors.

An expected 50% population increase in this corridor by 2035 will need light rail.

Parramatta Road, with its abandoned warehouses and inefficient use of land, is crying out for George Street-like urban renewal.

It would conveniently connect workers and students to where they need to be – hospitals, universities, commercial and retail hubs. An interchange at Central would multiply the connection options.



Supplied By

 ALTRAC
LIGHT RAIL



An artist impression shows how light rail could help transform Parramatta Road with a mix of medium density housing while retaining much of the current streetscape ambience

BARRIERS THAT LIMIT REIMAGINING THE ‘THREE-ROADS’

Unfortunately, numerous impediments have prevented the ‘reimagining’ of Parramatta Road, Victoria Road and the Great Western Highway to make them part of the solution to the housing supply crisis.

PLANNING

There is a planning inertia. Mixed-use developments that can take seven months to approve in Queensland can take up to five years here.

COUNCIL ATTITUDES

Local councils should be encouraged to take a pro-development stance. Councils also need help to address expert staff shortages in key areas such as development approvals.

LACK OF URGENCY

Across all tiers of government a sense of urgency appears to have been missing up until recently to solve the current and looming housing shortage.

FEDERAL AND STATE PARTNERSHIP

Federal and state governments need to work in a cohesive and united way to find solutions for planning and affordable housing.

IMMIGRATION DISCONNECT

The migrant intake is a matter for the Federal Government while housing is seen primarily a State function and both are out of sync in Sydney.



Victoria Road at Drummoyne (left)
Parramatta Road at Homebush (top)
The Great Western Highway looking west to Penrith (bottom)



(Left to top) Existing developments near the start of Victoria Road at Parramatta and on Victoria Road at Drummoyne



(Bottom) Slow progress in medium rise housing development at Granville on Parramatta Road

THE ROAD OUT OF SYDNEY'S HOUSING CRISIS

Sydney's housing crisis is having multiple impacts on home buyers, renters, and the ability of essential workers to live close to where they work.

Time is running out to employ multi-faceted solutions that represent the best road out of the housing crisis.

We must eliminate obstacles to housing growth, bury the NIMBY culture that pulls up the ladder from the grasp of future generations, and apply innovative thinking to drive the reform and housing delivery outcomes Sydney needs.

Sydney's housing crisis presents a policy challenge of extraordinary urgency and demands bold political, community, and industry leadership.

Housing supply that is close to where people work across Sydney is key to seeing our city continue to grow and increase its productivity.

Sydney's 'Three-Roads' solution is an opportunity to grow Sydney within its current borders and infrastructure access.

There are also broader goals at play to help overcome Sydney's housing crisis with like-minded organisations joining together to advocate for real solutions.

Housing Now! is one such alliance that has brought together ideas on how to solve Sydney's housing crisis. Many of these ideas align with the 'Three-Roads' strategy and would be a welcome reprieve to Sydneysiders.

We urge government and industry to get behind these ideas and get the ball rolling on reducing housing pressures and increasing affordability in our city.

INNOVATIVE IDEAS AND A CALL TO ACTION

Housing Now! has produced seven ideas to help turn around the challenges of Sydney's housing crisis into solutions.

1

CLEARING THE BACKLOG

Identify and prioritise planning proposals that are already in the system to ensure supply uplift can begin immediately.

3

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Housing dedicated to low and medium income people, who are otherwise priced out.

2

HOUSING BY TRANSPORT LINKS

Prioritise and reduce rezoning timelines, with a template approach to rezonings, including Sydney Metro and Train Stations along with increased density around Light rail stops to fast-track housing delivery.

4

MODERN DESIGN PATTERN BOOK

Commission a modern pattern book with a suite of approved designs by recognised architects developed in partnership with local neighbourhoods. It will boost infill development and grow the supply of townhouses, terraces, dual-occupancies, and small residential flat buildings across the R2 and R3 zones.

5

TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

Technology that can reduce the cost of housing at speed through the modularisation of building components. Design for Manufacture and Assembly (DfMA) is already used in other states.

Artificial intelligence also has a role to play in reducing the processing times for development applications.

6

COUNCIL INCENTIVES

The NSW Government should incentivise councils financially to overdeliver on their housing targets. Additional funds will allow councils to better fund local infrastructure that can be tied to the provision of amenities to support new housing developments – such as parks, pools, and community facilities.

7

PLANNING SYSTEM REFORM

The existing planning system takes far too long to navigate, is overly burdensome and creates uncertainty for developers and community alike. This increases purchase price costs of a new home.



Faded glory on Parramatta Road at Petersham where there are numerous empty shopfronts and other signs of urban decay

The Three Roads





Victoria Road looking towards Sydney CBD

**BUSINESS
SYDNEY**

**BUSINESS
WESTERN
SYDNEY**

